



“The Basics” For Effective SICs

1

What Is An SIC?

A School Improvement Council (SIC) is:

- **broad-based**
 - parents – teachers – community members
 - students – administrators – school leaders
- **advisory only**
- **focused on school improvement**
- **required at every K-12 public school by law**



2

SICs in South Carolina

SICs were established in state law 40 years ago. Ensuing legislation through the years has strengthened SIC roles and responsibilities.

- 1977 – Education Finance Act (EFA)
- 1984 – Education Improvement Act (EIA)
- 1993 – Early Childhood Act (Act 135)
- 1998 – Education Accountability Act (EAA)
- 2014 – Read to Succeed Act



3

What SICs Do

Provide input and feedback on strategic improvement plans and updates

By law, every school must create five-year Plan and update annually
Includes reading plans required by “Read to Succeed” Act

Assist school in implementing improvement activities

Activities may be from Plan or developed by SIC

Monitor and report on progress toward improvement goals

Annual *SIC Report to the Parents*
Narrative in the school's yearly *SC Report Card*



4

Types of SIC Members

- Elected**
 - Parents
 - Teachers
 - Students (Grades 9-12)
 - Serve staggered two-year terms
- Appointed**
 - Community Members
 - SIC determines length of term in bylaws
- Ex-Officio:**
 - Principal
 - Others by virtue of their position, knowledge, or experience such as PTA/PTO chair, Teacher of the Year, Parent Liaison, Past SIC Chair



5

SIC Elections

By law, SIC elections must be held **annually** and completed by **October 15**

Use any method that is fair and aimed at getting high levels of participation

Spring elections should include incoming students/families of feeder schools



6

Types of SIC Elections

Parents Elect Parents	Piggyback on school events that bring large numbers of parents to school
Teachers Elect Teachers	Nominations and elections usually held during an all teacher meeting
Students Elect Students	Can hold at same time as student government elections if the timing is right; SIC positions should be a separate line on ballots

See SIC Elections Toolkit for more info @ sic.sc.gov

7

SIC Appointments

SIC community members are appointed by the principal

Should be individuals who aren't parents or employed by the district or school who can:

- Bring resources
- Lend expertise
- Build community support
- Think beyond the usual suspects

See SIC Handbook for suggestions @ sic.sc.gov

8

Minimum SIC Size

Elementary and Middle Schools					
Elected		Appointed		Ex-Officio	
Parents		Teachers		Community Members	Principal
High Schools (Grade 9 and above)					
Elected			Appointed		Ex-Officio
Parents		Teachers		Community Members	Principal

9

How Big is Too Big?

Law doesn't limit the number of SIC members

But bigger isn't always better.

Your SIC should reflect the size and diversity of the school, but not be so big that it becomes unwieldy or unmanageable.

Not everyone has to be a "member" of the SIC. Anyone interested can attend meetings, serve on committees, or help with SIC initiatives.

10

Getting Started

Elect SIC Officers	Make Meeting Schedule	Distribute Key Materials
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair/Co-Chairs • Vice Chair • Secretary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 8 meetings per year • Consider needs of all members when selecting days and times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>SIC Handbook</i> • Current SIC Bylaws • School Improvement Plan

11

“If you had to identify – in one word – the reason why the human race has not achieved its full potential, that word would be ‘meetings’.”

Dave Barry, Author & Humorist

12

What Does an Effective SIC Meeting Look Like?

Hint: The answer isn't "listening quietly to reports for an hour...."

- The SIC Chair runs the meeting
- Correction/approval of prior meeting's minutes
- Report/Update from the principal
- Committee Reports/Work Sessions/Guest Speakers
- Next Steps
- Discussions are focused but lively
- All SIC members are actively engaged



13

Best Practices for SIC Meetings

SIC Chair:

- Develops agenda/meeting goals with the principal
- Ensures meeting notices & materials are circulated in advance of the meeting
- Runs the meeting & coordinates discussion

SIC Vice Chair:

- Assists the Chair & acts in absence of the Chair

SIC Secretary:

- Takes notes, distributes drafts & maintains SIC records

Principal:

- Provides information & answers questions

See SIC Handbook for full duties @ sic.sc.gov



14

SICs & the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

SICs are considered "public bodies" as defined by South Carolina law (Title 30, Chapter 4)

Meetings are open

Post notices of Meeting Schedules & Agendas

Records are open: Bylaws, Minutes, Membership

Keep SIC records on file



15

Developing SIC Bylaws

- Bylaws are the SIC's rules of the road
- Keep your bylaws handy and up-to-date
- Bylaws should cover the following:

Purpose – Membership – Election/Appointment
Tenure – Officers/Duties – Meetings – Voting
Training – Amendments

See SIC Bylaws Toolkit for more info @ sic.sc.gov



16

"What lies in our power to do
lies in our power not to do."

Aristotle, Greek Teacher & Philosopher



17

Steps to Effective SIC Action

Use data to learn about your school's needs and strengths

Pick an SIC "Area of Focus"

Set a specific SIC goal that can be measured

Select one or more activities targeting the SIC goal



18

SICs Often Adopt Goals and Activities From the School Improvement Plan

Improvement Plan describes school needs and strengths in three areas

- Academic achievement
- Teacher/administrator quality
- School climate

Identifies areas of focus and goals

- SIC can select an area of focus and goal from the Plan

Provides an action plan for achieving goals

- SIC can help with implementing activities listed in Action Plan
- SIC can develop additional activities that complement ones in the Action Plan



19

Use Committees to Help Organize SIC Work

- Committees formed around SIC areas of focus or goals**
- Committees do research, tend to details and logistics, and prepare recommendations to submit to the full SIC
- Committees report on their work regularly to the full SIC**
- Committee members don't have to be SIC members
- SICs can also form standing committees for ongoing work in areas such as member recruitment, publicity or advocacy**



20

Reporting on SIC Work

- **SIC issues (by April 30) the *SIC Report to the Parents* outlining progress for the current school year**
Needs – Goals – Actions – Results
Examples available on SC-SIC website
- **With the principal, the SIC writes the annual narrative for the *SC School Report Card***
Briefly describes the school & notes goals, successes & challenges for the year reported
- **Tell the story stats alone don't tell about your school**



21

Dick & Tunky Riley Award for SIC Excellence

- Presented annually by SC-SIC to recognize outstanding & effective efforts of a local SIC**
- Submit application, Case Statement & supporting materials
- Three-level judging process**
- Single winner & four Honorable Mentions
- Other SICs can receive Honor Roll status**



22

2019 Riley Award Honorees

- Winner – Hilton Head Island Middle SIC**
(Beaufort County School District)
- Chandler Creek Elementary SIC**
(Greenville County Schools)
- Chapin Middle SIC**
(School District Five of Lexington & Richland Counties)
- Flowertown Elementary SIC**
(Dorchester School District Two)
- Hilton Head Island High SIC**
(Beaufort County School District)



23

SC-SIC Vision and Mission

Vision

“To promote and support civic engagement for quality public education in South Carolina.”

Mission

“SC-SIC facilitates meaningful parental and community involvement in our state’s public schools by providing resources, tools, and strategies to local School Improvement Councils and other stakeholders groups.”



24

Services Provided by SC-SIC

- Website (sic.sc.gov) with free downloadable materials, resources, and information
- Electronic newsletter (*Council News*) for SIC members
- Periodic updates (*In the Loop*) touching on SIC related topics, educational issues, and legislation
- Social Media – Facebook and Twitter
- Variety of training opportunities statewide
- Technical assistance via telephone, email, and on-site visits
- SC Education Policy Fellowship Program (SC-EPFP)
- Resources of the Carolina Family Engagement Center (CFEC)



25

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead, Anthropologist



26

Contact Information

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27